

HIGH TRIBUTE PAID TO THE EDUCATIONAL ABILITIES OF MR. AND MRS. JOHN J. SMALLWOOD.

BY.
EX-JUDGE ADAMS, OF BANCHVILLE, VA.

Rev. John J. Smallwood, D. D., the subject of this sketch, was born at Rich Square, Northampton County, N. C., Sept. 19th, 1862, of slave parents. He was reared upon one of the largest cotton farms in Eastern North Carolina, working from the time he was six years old upon this large farm until August, 1877, at which time he ran away from the old plantation, and went to Scotland Neck, Halifax county, N. C. In this county Prof. Smallwood commenced his most wonderful career of study and speech making in 1879. He mastered the manhood and courage of true study and went before the Hon. William H. Day, the county superintendent of public instruction for Halifax county, N. C., and made application for a certificate to teach a public school. Maj. Day was astonished, and although he allowed "John" as he called him, to come in his private room and occupy a chair while he (Col. Day) was taking his usual afternoon bath, he went on with an oral examination. Dr. Smallwood had never gone to school. He had been sent from one of the great industrial schools of Virginia because he was poor, and had no one to speak for him. He had been compelled to study at night while he worked faithfully each day.

After Col. Day had completed his oral examination, he then told the young future school teacher to go to the blackboard. He (Col. Day) still arranging his toilet. At this blackboard, in the office of one of the finest scholars, the best informed lawyer and one of the most brilliant Democratic leaders at the South, gave the young almost discouraged yet determined future public school teacher, traveler, orator, writer and college founder and president a most rigid mathematical examination. John J. Smallwood "passed." Col. Day shouted: "John, I am done; I will give you a first grade certificate to teach in the public schools of Halifax county, N. C., as long as you will behave yourself." Dr. Smallwood bowed his thanks to Col. and to Gen. M. W. Ransom, ex-U. S. Senator, from North Carolina, and withdrew himself. Upon the following day John J. Smallwood opened a public school and taught school, before he had ever gone to school. In 1880 fresh from Shaw University, Dr. Smallwood came to Virginia to live, where he commenced a most brilliant public career. He opposed the late Gen. William Mahone, then U. S. Senator. He declared that Virginia could not repudiate her State debt of \$13,000,000. When the Hon. William E. Cameron, late of Chicago, Ill., was nominated as the Readjuster and Republican candidate for Governor in 1881, Prof. Smallwood, then a mere citizen of Virginia, took the stump against Col. Cameron, declaring "that Virginia could no more repudiate her honest debts than any private citizen could repudiate his honest debts, and retain his self-respect and the confidence of the best people of his community." He canvassed the entire state of Virginia. In 1882 he again canvassed the Second Congressional District against the Readjuster Candidate for Congress, and in 1884 this time he was instrumental in defeating Readjustment. In 1884, Nov. 18th, Prof. Smallwood said "I will never make another political speech, until I go to school and learn some sense." Although at this time he was and is called by all who knew him as the greatest living Negro orator in this South-land.

He is often referred to by the Norfolk Landmark, the Petersburg Index-Appeal, the Richmond Times-Dispatch, the Raleigh (N. C.) Observer, and the Southampton Democrat, always refer to Dr. John J. Smallwood as the "Black Cicero," "The Eloquent Gentleman of Color," "The brilliant scholar and orator." In 1884, Nov. 26th, Prof. Smallwood went to "Old Wesleyan," at Wilberham, Mass., He found himself the only Negro in this great Institution. He joined the Philo Society, strictly a white organization, and at once took the lead in public debates and in social life of the grand old school. Here Prof. Smallwood met his devoted friend and teacher, Hon. John E. Ricketts, L. L. D., President of Columbia Law School at 145 LaSalle street, Chicago, Ill. Judge Ricketts took a profound interest in his pupil of color and encouraged him and in many ways helped him. The two gentlemen have grown to love, honor and esteem each other as though they were both black men, or both white men.

In 1888, Prof. Smallwood went to Europe. He being elected from the State of Massachusetts by an entirely

white vote to represent the Sunday schools in the Springfield, Mass., District in the World's Sunday School Convention at London, in 1889. President Smallwood remained in Europe for quite ten or twelve months, lecturing and preaching. Upon his return to America he was invited to canvass the State of Rhode Island for Constitutional Prohibition with Gov. Goodloe, of N. H., and the late Miss Francis E. Willard. Throughout New England Mr. Smallwood was known as the greatest Negro orator of his day.



JOHN J. SMALLWOOD.
President of the Temperance Industrial and Collegiate Institute, Claremont, Virginia.

This great reputation honestly made caused jealous men to rise up against him. Slander and prejudice caused him to leave New England. In 1890 Dr. Smallwood returned to Europe. Under the auspices of the International Lecturing Bureau Association at a fee of \$1,000 per month, he speaking each night in the week except Saturday nights. It was my honor and pleasure as well as my opportunity to be in Great Britain just at this time and I found that this young Negro was the most powerful and eloquent orator that I ever heard. He is a modest, a plain but a very costly dresser, with a well shaped head, a quick strong eye and face, a most profound voice, and a manner of politeness that will win for him a consideration and a favor at the hands of any intelligent people. President Smallwood, while he was a student at Shaw University at Raleigh, N. C., was a class-mate of Prof. N. F. Roberts, D. D., The late Rev. Dr. J. C. Price, Rev. Dr. Aug. Shepard, Col. Jas. H. Young and the Hon. Geo. H. White, ex-M. C., Dr. Smallwood, in the sum-



MRS. ROSA E. SMALLWOOD.
Lady President of the Temperance Industrial and Collegiate Institute, Claremont, Virginia.

mer of 1886 read moral and mental science, at the University of Ottawa. Then in 1889, summer and fall of that year, he read moral and mental science under Prof. L. DeLonto, at Trinity University, England. Here he received the degree of Ph. D., but his wonderful modesty would never allow him to be called "Dr." not until his own good friends forced the title on him.

Prof. John J. Smallwood, in the face of the greatest possible opposition, bitter enmity and great embarrassment, founded Oct. 12th, 1892, The

Temperance Industrial and Collegiate Institute at Claremont, Surry county, Va., with less than ten people and much less than \$50, upon the west bank of the James River, within sight of "Old Jamestown," where the first cargo of human slaves landed May 12th, 1620.

By a very shrewd business deal, Dr. Smallwood bought of H. H. Chester, the old Claremont wharf tract of land, fronting the James River, for the sum of \$7,000. The acquisition of this James River property by Negroes, for the purpose of building a Negro college for Negroes, where once the Auction Block stood, where slave ships anchored, made the white citizens angry. In sixty days after Dr. Smallwood had made the purchase, his saw-mill, grist-mill, planing ma-

found sitting on the platform at his side under his trying circumstances. She is a most brilliant essayist, a fine poetess, a Democratic hostess, and a born scholar, as is her husband. She is very fair for a colored lady, while her husband is somewhat dark. They are both tall and very graceful and pleasant in manner, and attractive in conversation. They are both born teachers but never advertised themselves as such.

The Temperance, Industrial and Collegiate Institute, is solving the "Race Problem" at Claremont, and in Surry County, Ga.

History of the Institute.

The Temperance, Industrial and Collegiate Institute was founded October 12th, 1892, by the Rev. John J. Smallwood, the institution is non-sectarian and non-political, but strictly moral religious. The purpose of the institution to teach the Negro self-reliance, race pride, and practical trade, to establish, as financial conditions permit, various industries, house cleaning and scientific cooking, general laundry work upon a general business scale.

Typewriting and shorthand will be taught during the winter and spring terms of the present school.

It is also a hope for the rebuilding of the saw mill, that was destroyed by fire. A saw mill would give to the young men and boys an opportunity to work—which would enable them to assist in paying their own way. It is hoped during the present school year to open again the mattress factory, even though it can only do but little along this line. A good mattress factory would pay the institution.

Having a good saw mill, the institution would be enabled to saw its own lumber, which would enable it to build more easily its own buildings.

The institution has suffered a great many years, because of its embarrassment and the lack of needed industries and for the want of money to establish various branches of trade. Although the institution has behind it no special church organization, it has lived from 1892 to 1903, under the most trying and embarrassing circumstances.

Four hundred and ninety-eight students have passed in and out of the institution since '92. Fifty-nine men have bought farms, seven have become ministers of the gospel, four blacksmiths, twelve school teachers, one a lawyer, two doctors, and three carpenters, eight high school teachers and hotel waiters, two temperance lecturers, seventeen tradesmen of various kinds, nine home owners in cities in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The institution is in great need of more substantial buildings. A good dormitory, 95x55 feet, four-story, for the girls and a building 65x45 feet for the boys, four-story. In the girls' buildings a good laundry and a special scientific cooking and a house-keeping department for the purpose of teaching scientific cooking and house cleaning.

The institution has a good farm fronting the James river, upon which is cultivated corn, potatoes and vegetables. The fruits are canned by the institution and the work on the farm is carried on by the officials and the students of the institution.

The sewing and dressmaking department has already commenced to pay for itself. The farm has for years produced corn enough for bread and stock feed. Scientific farming is being made a specialty for the present school year.

The institution for the past eleven years has lived upon its merits. It has sought to attend to its own mission as it saw fit and as God has called it into existence.

In politics as in church creeds Dr. Smallwood is an independent man in his views. Very Democratic in all of his principles, and a most learned man in subjects. Strange indeed it, that the Negro has always produced great men as the white race, that could never push through dishonor to fame, as some weaker men seek to do.

Rev. Dr. John J. Smallwood for thirty six years. I owned as a slave his aged, but good mother. I have never known this Negro, to be taught but the brave, manly, moral, Christian gentleman education for the Negro meets my personal approval. The Negro is just the same as any other human social. He must be taught human greatness before he can become great.

I call him Doctor Smallwood because he is a scholar in the full sense of that word, he is a gentleman. He is a Christian and educator.

Dr. Smallwood said to the writer a few days ago, while on a visit to the Temperance, Industrial and Collegiate

Institute: "I have made two mistakes in my life: I have thought all men honest. I have found some jealous, mean, willful, sly and always ready to slander their fellow man. Then I once went in debt to buy school property. I will never do that again. I am paying off as fast as I can all of the debts of the Temperance, Industrial and Collegiate Institute. God forgive me, I will never go in debt again."

The future usefulness of the Temperance, Industrial and Collegiate Institute and its courageous President, is indeed promising. Let us all hope that the Negro race will yet produce

a million of such Negro men and Negro women as is John J. and Rosa E. Smallwood, who by God's will, are practical Negro educators and true of human greatness.

Note.—The above sketch on the life and work along educational lines of John J. and Mrs. Smallwood in the South, was written by W. L. D. Dato Adams, L. L. D., ex-Member of the Virginia Legislature, ex-Judge of the Circuit Court of that state and an ex-Member of the Legislature of 1862 and 1864 in North Carolina, a life-long Democrat, an ex-Slave holder and a of Berlin, Germany.—Editor.



REV. JOHN W. ROBINSON,

Who is closing his fifth year as pastor of St. Mark's church, State, near 47th st. He has made a most excellent record. The work began in humble surroundings at 135 W. 47th st., with very little prospect, it has now become a most respectable church enterprise, and on Christmas

evening its several hundred members and many friends of the church, presented him with an elegant gold watch. Rev. Robinson is enterprising, progressive, a thorough going Christian minister and a power for good in the community.



T. J. HUNTER.

During the months of January and February T. J. Hunter 3149 State street will give 15 per cent discount on all gents' suits, or overcoats, ladies' jackets, skirts, furs, etc. Ladies and gents suits of every description, cut and made up in the latest styles on

easy payments. Do not ask him as to the kind or quality of goods he carries, but call up Douglas, phone 2961, and tell him what you want. His salesrooms are strictly private and the best treatment is accorded to all of his customers.



M. J. BUTLER.

State senator of the Fourth Senatorial district, who, owing to his fair and honorable record in the Legislature of this State in the past, will experience no difficulty in being elected as a state senator in 1904.